

SOCIAL ACTION

VOL. 9

NO. 12

DECEMBER 1959

THIS SIDE AND THAT	C. C. C	505
AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT IN UNDERDEVELOPED COUNTRIES	P. CASPERSZ	512
THE SHIFTING SANDS OF DISRUPTION, II	L. B. DIETRICH	523
THE AHMEDABAD LABOUR RELATIONS EXPERIMENT	J. CUELI	536
SOCIAL SURVEY	A. F. & J. H.	545

This Side and That

On the Labour Front

Can an illegal strike (i.e. one undertaken in contravention of the provision of the Industrial Disputes Act) be justifiable? "It is not permissible to characterize an illegal strike as justifiable" said the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court when delivering judgment in the appeal by the Indian General Navigation and Railway Company against its workmen. The Chief Justice added: "It must be clearly understood by those who take part in an illegal strike that they thereby make themselves liable to be dealt with by their employers".

How, in fact, employers should deal with the matter was further made clear in the judgment. They should keep in view "the interests of the industry", the activity of those "who merely participated in the strike", and workers who "had not only participated in the illegal strike, but had fomented it and had been guilty of violence or doing acts detrimental to the maintenance of law and order in the locality where work had to be carried on."

On the same day that the Supreme Court passed this ruling, the National Railway Mazdoor Union held its annual convention at Hyderabad, and the President of the Andhra

branch of the Hind Mazdoor Sabha deplored the fact that the present day machinery for settling industrial disputes was most inadequate. It is common knowledge that despite the well intentioned aims of the Industrial Disputes Act, as a piece of legislation for bringing about harmony between management and labour, it has not proved too successful.

But this is not all. Besides the fact that legislation by itself can do but little to bring about any lasting social reform, what little it can accomplish needs an intelligent use of its provisions. There is, indeed, little use in outlawing illegal strikes when the majority of workers, in most cases, are often ignorant both of the reasons for a strike and the nature of an illegal strike! As for the Industrial Disputes Act, it is an open secret that most industrial workers do not know what it means, and the measure of protection which it affords them! The obvious conclusion is that our Labour Unions have a duty to make the education of the workers a task of first importance. This, indeed, is not an impossible task when Labour Unions are organized along sound and healthy lines.

That the Indian Trade Union Movement is moving towards this, is, perhaps, indicated with the establishment of the first Indian National Iron and Steel Workers Federation on October 13th, at Jamshedpur. The adoption of the Constitution of the Federation, in the presence of about seventy delegates from affiliated iron and steel workers' unions augurs well for the future both of the steel industry and the trade union movement in the country. The jurisdiction of the Federation extends over all iron and steel plants both in the public and private sectors within the Indian Union.

The National Iron and Steel Workers Federation will act as a central representative organisation "to negotiate,

conclude, modify or revoke collective agreements on wages and conditions of service on behalf of all workers employed in the iron and steel industry". The Constitution of the Federation comprises a general assembly of delegates elected by affiliated unions on the basis of numerical strength, a general council to act as the supreme executive body with powers to lay down general policy and guide the working committee in the administration of the Federation, and a working committee to frame rules for affiliation of unions, methods of voting and recourse to strikes or satyagraha to secure its demands.

That India's Steel Industry is the first to set up a National Federation for its workers is not surprising. The industry has a long record of healthy trade union activity, matched by, on the side of the employers, understanding and good will. In fact, it would be no exaggeration to say that the way to the Federation was paved by the collective agreements between the Tata Iron and Steel Company and the Tata Workers' Union. With the establishment of the Iron and Steel Workers Federation, the employees of the steel plants at Rourkela, Bhilai, Durgapur, Burnpur and the Bhadravati Steel Works now constitute a union of iron and steel workers with those of the Tata Iron and Steel Company.

On the Political Front

Salesmanship is no less an art in the world of business than in the world of modern politics, and recent events in the country have proved a windfall for some of our political parties, while for others they have been "bad business". Perhaps, the party whose business has, indeed, been "bad" is the Communist Party in India. Even its dialectical twists and turns have proved of little help, and its salesmanship usually so efficient in hiding the vileness of its wares has shown itself in its true colours! Within the Party itself,

there appears to be a deal of confusion and dissatisfaction. How to explain the much lauded Communist theory of "peaceful co-existence" in the face of Red China's aggression? Facts die hard, even before the onslaught of Communistic dialectics! Some, within the Party cheerfully accept the Peking version of the "incident" and would fain sacrifice India to the wishes of Communism. Others are hard put to it to maintain party unity, and make a show of respecting the hurt feelings of every Indian citizen.

But whatever party-strife the leaders of the C. P. I. have to deal with, they must have realized by now that their common-front policy with other political parties is wearing thin. The Praja Socialist Party which, as it was once reported, flirted with the idea of a common front with the C. P. I., is now pulling away. Both in West Bengal and in Maharashtra the idea of a common front between the two parties now seems a thing of the past. In fact, in West Bengal, the P. S. P. had hardly any share in the Communist sponsored food agitation, while in Maharashtra, Mr. N. G. Goray of the P. S. P. eloquently affirmed that the Maharashtra Samiti would not tolerate the "treacherous stand" taken by the C. P. I. over the McMahon Line.

Others who long believed that Communism is "just a rowdy kind of politics" are awakening up to the fact that it is something more, and appear to see it for the evil thing that it is. Mr. Nehru has strongly resented the resolution of the Calcutta convention of the C. P. I. on the Indo-Chinese border dispute. Mrs. Indira Gandhi has underlined the fact that the C. P. I. invariably favours any communist country that happens to be at variance with this country, and not so long ago, Pandit Pant hinted that the C. P. I. was guilty of subversive activities, in as much as it was trying to disrupt the unity of the country in the face of the Chinese aggression.

This is all to the good and should certainly help strengthen the ranks of Congress. Moreover, it will go a long way towards allaying the fears of those who believe, rightly or wrongly, that Communism has some kind of an appeal to some top ranking members of the ruling party. Indeed, it would appear that the Congress Party is undergoing some useful changes under the leadership of Mrs. Indira Gandhi, the Congress President. She was quick to see how critical the situation was in Kerala when the Red Government in the State stood isolated from the mass of the people. On the issue of the bifurcation of the Bombay State she has shown practical foresight. She has promised the people of the State to meet their wishes, and so put an end to an unfortunate and long drawn out period of agitation and uncertainty, in which Communists love to work.

The birth of the Swatantra Party has been accepted as an event of major political importance, and the Party has drawn a good deal of attention even from Mr. Nehru. Theoretically, at least, the Party draws its inspiration from the Sarvodaya movement, and its doctrine of trusteeship. In practice it crusades against totalitarian trends of Government and the ever expanding power of the State. As yet, however, the Party has not drawn any mass support, and it is up to the strategists of Party to work out a plan which makes their salesmanship something more than empty slogans and promises.

Wanted! a model for India

To be more precise India is still in search of an economic structure suited to her needs and cultural pattern of life. Not so long ago, the ruling party, at its Avadi session, put out the model of a socialistic pattern of society, and, perhaps, to give greater precision to this view, the Nagpur session followed with its insistence on joint-farming along co-operative lines.

It would be wrong to suppose that the vision of Socialism had faded from the minds of top-ranking Congressmen, but in so far as the man in the street is concerned, the socialistic pattern has not caught his imagination. Indeed, the measure of control which is inevitable with any type of economic planning has already given him a healthy distaste of all types of control, and anyone who knows anything about Socialism need not be told that "control" is and remains the very life blood of economic socialism. In fact, it is not often easy to see where socialistic control ends and communistic regimentation begins!

No less distasteful to many in the country has been the slogan of the Nagpur session on co-operative joint farming. Whether for political purposes, or from a genuine fear for democratic values in the country, large sections of the public and their leaders have voiced their opposition to any measure which is patterned on a communistic economy. Speaking at Vijayawada, last month, Mr. Nehru has tried to allay the fears of many on this subject by insisting that joint farming will, in no way, be compulsory. The occasion lent itself for the Prime Minister to take a swing at the Swatantra Party, which, at least to some extent, was born when many in the country felt a first step towards totalitarian regimentation was taken by the Congress resolution on joint co-operative farming. Mr. Nehru is reported to have said that a free enterprise economic structure, as advocated by the Swatantra Party was not a model for India. On the other hand, he could have no truck with "a totalitarian society where the individual had no scope at all to assert himself". According to Mr. Nehru, an ideal society, "should be a co-operative society and not an acquisitive society or a profit making society". Of course, the trouble with this is, that such a society will always remain but an ideal, unless some means are taken to control both the acquisitive and profit instincts which, on the one

hand are essential to economic progress and on the other must be kept within reasonable limits!

Again when laying the foundation stone of the Venkateswara University's engineering college, the Prime Minister took the occasion to insist on the necessity of co-operative farming. In fact, he said that students should be so trained that they may be able to assume the leadership of villages and of the co-operative movement. The Community Development Blocks scattered all over the country give our young men ample occasions to try out "life in the villages", but there is nothing to indicate that our young people at school and in colleges are ready for the experiment. Indeed, it needs no great experience with educational institutions to understand that the majority of modern students seem to have but one ambition — a job in some town or city!

C. C. C.

ARREARS OF SUBSCRIPTION

Subscribers in arrears with their subscription for 1959 (and earlier, if so) are requested to note that the arrears will be recovered through V.P.P., to which, we hope, they will agree.

MANAGER
Social Action

Agricultural Development in Underdeveloped Countries

"Development consciousness" is perhaps the most significant trait in many Asian and African underdeveloped countries which have recently attained independent political status. And in the general task of national economic development the plea for rapid industrialization is on everyone's lips.

There is no denying that only national economic planning can raise or even merely maintain standards of life in the context of rapidly increasing populations and increasing international competition. Nor can it be denied that industrialization must have an important place in all such planning. But only to their peril can the underdeveloped countries forget the place of the rural sector in their economics.

The Agricultural Sector in the National Economy

In many of these countries agriculture directly or indirectly occupies between 70-80 per cent of the population. It is in the rural sector that the sure foundations must be laid for industrial development and indeed for the progress of the entire national economy. Thus agricultural development must be seen not only in its immediate results of a better life for the rural masses but also in the context of a developing national economy.

Some national planners have not been slow to realize the importance of agricultural development. Thus agriculture, which is the chief occupation of the rural population, has been accorded priority of treatment in the three national economic programmes that have been published in Ceylon since the last War ended. Ceylon's new Ten

Year Plan envisages a total gross investment of Rs. 13,600 million between 1959-68. Of this, Rs. 3,110 million or 22.9 per cent are to be spent on agriculture.

There are three chief reasons for giving prominence to agriculture in the underdeveloped countries. First, since the nutritional standards are excessively low, a prime anxiety of the planner must be the social one of providing the masses with better and more abundant food at prices within their reach. Of course present consumption must be limited in order to ensure sufficient resources for investment. But substantial investment can be channelled to agricultural purposes. Fixing the welfare of the people instead of the power of the State as the main target of economic development makes all the difference between a genuine democracy and a dictatorship.

Secondly, agricultural progress will help the country to reduce its bill on food imports, thereby saving foreign exchange for the imports of capital goods (which are themselves to be used for the further development of both agriculture and industry). An idea of the magnitudes involved may be obtained from the fact that of total imports into Ceylon of Rs. 1,804.1 million in 1957, food alone accounted for Rs. 712.2 million.

Thirdly, agricultural development will create the food surpluses needed to feed the new industrial population. Ragnar Nurkse spoke of 'the saving potential concealed in rural underemployment'. The logic of his argument may be conceded, but the practical problem remains how to ensure that it is rural saving and not consumption which increases once the rural unemployed are drawn into industry, often far away from the village. Totalitarian and colonial governments can and in fact do use varying degrees of compulsion ranging from sheer terrorism as in

Russia and China to the Marketing Board system of West Africa. Democratic countries are pledged to methods other than brute compulsion. And it may be that increased food production is the way by which those who remain in the village can consume more food than before while at the same time producing enough to feed the workers who have been drafted into industry.

Agricultural Survey

Once the importance of the agricultural sector is understood, it must be accurately surveyed. A plan for this sector must be built up and carried out against the background of information relating to past, present and likely future trends. Agricultural development sometimes lags behind industrial development either because the survey has not been so carefully made or because greater difficulties attend the agricultural (rural) survey than the industrial (urban) survey.

The rural people from whom the data have to be collected are unsophisticated folk unaccustomed to the precision required in a statistical survey. They might even be suspicious of the motives behind those who come to gather information.

There is the further difficulty of classifying and evaluating data. Let us instance the problem of assigning money values to self-subsistence production which figures so largely in the village economy of underdeveloped societies. It must also be decided whether the money values are to be quoted as ex-farm or as market prices for the difference in either case — representing the costs of transportation and risk — might be appreciable.

There is also what has been called the 'personal equation' of the investigator, his own fitness for his task, his

objectivity and the care he takes to cross-check his results. Sometimes the most amazing mistakes can be made. In the 1920's the population of Hongkong was put at over one million. The only basis for this excessive so-called 'estimate' was the fact that 'the amount of nightsoil now being collected approximates to 2,500 piculs or nearly four million taels, which, at 3 taels per head, gives a population of over 1,300,000 without allowing for wastage.'⁽¹⁾ The investigators overlooked the fact that for a rice-eating population the allowance of 3 taels per head was too meagre!

Lastly, in the matter of agricultural development, special and careful attention must be paid in the survey to the social environment. Economic development takes place against a certain social and institutional background. Even if, in the interests of quicker development, the background must be reformed, it must first be correctly appraised.

The survey must provide information regarding the extent of the educational and technological preparedness for economic change. Otherwise changes might be introduced which the village population is unwilling or unable to accept. There have been instances in recent years of under-developed countries having received aid by way of expensive agricultural or industrial machinery which no one in the country knew how to use, much less to repair. Murray Straus and B. H. Farmer cite the instance of the Minneriya-Polonnaruwa colonization scheme in Ceylon where an 'improved' iron plough could not be shifted by the buffalo so that confidence in the particular 'improvement' was shattered⁽²⁾.

(1) in Kuczynski, *Colonial Population*, p. VIII.

(2) B. H. Farmer, *Pioneer Peasant Colonization in Ceylon*, p. 285.

Agricultural extension and research

If a survey is a pre-condition, research and extension are continuing requisites of rural development. Without such extension and research it is futile to expect rural economic growth. Research is itself a pre-condition of extension for only when the necessary research has been made can the knowledge thus gained be transmitted to the farmers.

It is sometimes objected that research and extension are too expensive. But those who make this objection overlook the fact that expenditure on research and education of the rural population is a very productive investment, especially in the poorer agricultural countries where present yields are low and where the possibility of increasing yields is correspondingly great. W. Arthur Lewis opts for a rate of spending on agricultural research and education at between $3/4$ — 1 per cent of national income. The U. S. A. spends on agricultural extension and research about $3/4$ per cent of her net agricultural output. Like the U. K., the U. S. A. has one extension worker to every 700 persons gainfully occupied in agriculture, and Japan too spends considerable sums on agricultural services. These countries have found their investments quite profitable. It is not surprising. If 1 per cent of national income were spent on agricultural research and education and this leads to an increase in the national income of $1/2$ per cent, this would represent a 50 per cent return on investment. Not only national planners but also individual owners should pay heed to these figures.

There is no doubt that in many underdeveloped countries agricultural yields can be increased considerably by the introduction of techniques already known. Experts say that even with the present findings of research agricultural yields in India per acre could often be doubled. In

Ceylon too, if methods already known were introduced on a wide scale, the output of agricultural crops would be much higher than it is now.

Agricultural extension workers, however, need to be specially qualified for their work. A university degree is by no means necessary nor even desirable in many cases. Ideally the agricultural extension worker must be someone with practical experience of farming in the region with perhaps a two-year period of training in techniques. He must also be someone whom the villagers will find acceptable; he must not be domineering and he may need to be of the correct caste.

What of the suggestion in the Punjab Canal Colonies Committee Report of 1907-08 that 'the colonies would probably do better to rely for their future leaders amongst the agricultural community on men raised from the peasant class'? There is indeed a strong case for seeking out extension workers from among the villagers themselves. Unfortunately, however, the curriculum of studies in village schools often bears but little relation to the actual life of the village. This is perhaps one explanation why many village youths show such little interest in school work. And those who succeed in studies tend either to drift into the towns and cities or become schoolmasters.

Land reform

Agricultural development is not merely a matter of making available improved techniques. It is often linked with the question of land reform. The aim must be to give the peasant a personal stake in the increasing of productivity. If the cultivator knows that, however much he produces, his own share of the produce will remain unaltered, usually at subsistence level, while the surplus accrues to the landlord, there is no incentive for him to

invent or to use new methods. W. Arthur Lewis suggests that in this arrangement for a better distribution of produce might lie the greatest single social factor affecting economic growth in countries on the verge of it.

The Danish experience of which relatively little is known in the underdeveloped countries is very much to the point. Vinding Kruse⁽³⁾ has shown how the 'social order of law' in the 18th century gradually imposed itself on the owners of real estate in Denmark, substituting its own values of common interest to the selfish economic motivation of a few large property owners. However, in Denmark the old capitalistic manorial system did not yield place to the communistic one of common husbandry, of which the Danish farmers had long experience and of which they knew the shortcomings. But the reforms gave rise to a new and numerous class of property owners, personally interested in their farms, happy and contented.

It is also worthy of note that the Danish agricultural reforms of the 18th century were carried out from above. Noble and generous owners like the Counts Bernstorff carried out redistribution of land on their estates, granted the farmers copyhold tenure, and fixed a cheap rent-payment instead of socage. And the words of Count Christian Ditlev Reventlow breathe the fire of the genuine social reformer: '....the message of freedom has come. There lie the plunder, the chains, the yoke, the long whips, the wooden horse, the Spanish cloak, all gone.... I shall not rest, body or soul, until the whole work is done, until the temple of thralldom has been broken and that of freedom is built.'

More than the land reformers, landowners in the underdeveloped countries must be quick to learn the lessons of

(3) *The Right of Property*, Oxford University Press, 1939.

Danish agricultural history. The peasants of Asia and Africa must come into their own. Even on the great estates producing commercial crops for the world market schemes must be worked out to give the workers a vital and personal share in the concern. They must be emancipated from the status of paid labourers to that of small property owners — the property in their case being perhaps in the form of shares. By giving the peasants and the estate workers the sense of personal ownership, the latent spiritual and moral energizing forces in them will be released, not only for the development of their own personalities but for the prosperity of their country. The emancipation of the peasant is not only socially desirable; it is also economically profitable.

Rural exodus

When a country is about to embark on a process of rapid development, it will be very useful to attempt to foresee future trends and forestall possible dangers. In this circumstance the underdeveloped countries today are favourably placed. For they can draw on the experience — good or ill — of the older countries.

Economic development in several of these countries has been accompanied by a rural exodus which, in some countries, has reached proportions that are truly alarming. Holland, England and Ireland, for instance, are witnessing today such a process of rural depopulation.

The reasons for this are varied but are not difficult to find. In the countryside there has been a decline in employment opportunities, since the centres of economic activity have moved away from the villages into the towns. Agricultural wages too have generally been lower than industrial wages and the possibilities of promotion and change into a more lucrative employment have been

smaller. Finally, as rural awareness increases — largely due to better education and communication — the demonstration effect begins to assert itself. The social and cultural attractions of the towns and cities begin to exert an irresistible influence especially on school leavers. In the West, town values and leisure prove particularly attractive to girls who have left the countryside in even greater numbers than men.

It is possible that a smaller tendency to leave the countryside will manifest itself in Asia and Africa. It may even be that thought in many underdeveloped countries there has as yet been no large scale exodus, there has in fact been a tendency for the better educated and more enterprising youths to drift into the urban areas. The Economic Survey of Rural Ceylon already noted this phenomenon in 1951.

A variety of reasons should impel planners to halt this drift. In many towns there is already much unemployment. The number must not be increased by new recruits from the villages until there is a more than corresponding increase in urban avenues for employment. Housing and sanitary conditions are notoriously bad in the towns and cities of the underdeveloped countries. An influx from the country will only intensify the pressure on the few facilities available with grave danger to morality and health. Lastly, no one will deny that a prosperous agricultural environment is more propitious to human welfare than a crowded urban environment.

But this by no means implies that the present rural sector in fact provides such propitious surroundings. The whole burden of this article has been to put forward the case for rural development. It might seem contradictory to say that in order to develop agriculture it is necessary

to develop industries in the villages. But it is nevertheless true. What we need is, as Jeremiah Newman has suggested in a recent article⁽⁴⁾, a policy of 'rurbanization'. It will usually be impractical and uneconomic to set up industrial centres in all the villages, but it will be necessary to develop them in a few of the bigger centres. Government itself will perhaps need to intervene — by adequate taxes and subsidies — in order to convince stiff-necked industrialists that they can set up business quite profitably in market towns and large villages.

National planning must also provide for social amenities in the villages. As in the case of industry it will be uneconomical to try to build libraries and recreation halls in every single village. Centres will have to be chosen for every group of adjacent villages and the necessary transport provided to these centres from the surrounding areas. How few and far between are the village centres in Asia and Africa — not to speak of the villages — which provide even the most elementary social amenities. Those who live in the towns and know nothing of these inconveniences speak glibly of the lure of the countryside, suspecting little how drab life must be to youths who have been to school and then are condemned to lead their lives in places where the newspapers cannot be read nor the radio be heard.

If the life in the village is made interesting and economically profitable, there is no reason to fear a general rural exodus (though there may be healthy changes in the rural demographic pattern). For there are many forces impelling the villager to stay in the village. Jacqueline Huet⁽⁵⁾, analyzing the preference for residence in the country in a part of Belgium, has pointed to the following factors work-

(4) *Studies*, Winter 1958, pp. 388-402.

ing against a rural exodus: attachment to one's place of origin, lower rent for houses, the fact that some members of the man's family may have jobs locally, preference for a house in the country, the fact that parents may still be living in the country, a generally more economical way of life, motives of health. These reasons will, if anything, be more powerful in Asia and Africa.

Conclusion

The problem we have posed is not a choice between the industrial and the agricultural sectors. The problem rather is to strengthen the agricultural sector, not in the agricultural interest alone, but in that of the whole national economy and of industry itself. Whatever direction the future economic development of Asia and Africa will take, there can be but little doubt but that agriculture will remain an essential part of this development.

Have we paid sufficient attention to the factors involved in the raising up of a healthy and progressive agricultural sector? It was the purpose of this article to direct attention to some of these factors.

Paul Caspersz

(5) *ib.* p. 400.

The Shifting Sands of Disruption (continued)

IX. 1950 — Peace Struggle — direct action (strikes and sabotage) against rearmament. (Korean War). The outbreak of the Korean War changed the "cold war" to a red hot struggle for peace on the part of the Communist Parties throughout the world. Their means: "direct action", i.e. strikes and sabotage against the rearmament in the West.

In FRANCE this directive was the signal for sharp intensification of CGT instigated strike activity, but an abortive general strike in 1952, followed by a protest fiasco showed the direct action policy as a failure for the FCP.

Such was not the case in BRITAIN where the Communists were entrenched in the shop stewards' movement and thus could control the mass of the workers. In the 1952 strikes at Ford and Briggs, the entire membership of the local CP took part, although most of them were not employed at either plant. Communists from London were in behind-the-scene activities and where advising on tactics.

These two plants were deliberately selected as the stage for strikes on any issue. They fit the CP's scheme for industrial and economic disruption. Both were large factories employing thousands of workmen, a heavy concentration of manpower in a comparatively small area. They were close to one another, making intercommunication easy, near London, and so convenient for the concentration of action by Communist fractions and branches, and one union, Communist dominated, covered both factories.

The eyes and ears of the BCP in large plants are their Fractions, loosely organized groups of party members,

fellow travellers and dupes, which report local issues to the CP industrial department. If the grievance can be profitably aggravated nationally by the party, the industrial department seeks advice of the political committee. Once the decision has been made that it is in the interests of the party to develop that grievance into a large scale stoppage, the industrial department, through the shop stewards, directly takes over the leadership and starts the ball rolling. The shop stewards are told what resolutions they must try to get carried, what specific action they should aim at in their meetings. The programme, however, has been decided by the industrial department under the surveillance of the politbureau.

The Korean "Peace Struggle" merely added fuel to the fire in INDIA as the Communists called for a "mass struggle in the widest sense," and utilized the Goa and Linguistic issues to embarrass the government and to build a popular following.

X. 1953 — United Front (from above) : unity of section to split non-Communist unions. (Stalin dies). In 1953, the death of Stalin and the losses caused by their earlier aggressive action demanded a shift to more realistic methods. The old and so successful "united front from above" policy was taken out of moth balls, and unity of action tactics to split non-Communist opposition were once more in the fore :

The FRENCH CGT resolved : "to develop an active non-party following which will expand our capacity for action and our influence among the masses." These persons in the foreground could persuade free unionists that a spontaneous trend in public opinion required the adoption of the Communist course of action. Dissenters and undercover party agents in the ranks of the CGTFO also served the Communist purpose, drumming up opposition to free

union leaders, and seizing every opportunity to advocate unity of action with the Communists and the CGT.

While using these tactics in an attempt to destroy the free labour leaders from below, the Communists outwardly wooed them, coordinating their actions with the free labour confederation and attempting to win the agreement of these leaders to complete structural unification. They tolerated and even discreetly encouraged the progressive minority with a view to using it as bait to lure the free unions to unity.

The Communist source of strength, despite tremendous opposition in France is in the effectiveness of Party apparatus with its two pronged pincers operating simultaneously in the unions and directly in industry. Action within the union is the task of Fractions, the primary instrument for imposing the party's will on the rank and file. Their effectiveness is derived in part from the disciplined action and the observance of the strategic principle of "exerting the maximum strength at a given time and place", but their main foundation is the almost unbreakable grip on the directing boards of the unions. Although on three occasions government acts all but stripped the CGT of the bulk of its members, party fractions still retained control of union management.

The second prong of the pincers in party cells organized inside the factories, providing a highly flexible supplementary channel both for mobilizing outside support for the policies of the CGT, and for encouraging opposition of unaffiliated workers to the non-Communist union. These are also instrumental in inciting wildcat strikes for which the Communists wish to avoid official responsibility.

The Communist dominated WFTU called on the CP in BRITAIN in 1955 to "bring the workers into military

action against the Paris Agreements" and "to conduct a relentless fight against schemes for increased productivity." In answer to this directive a wave of unofficial strikes and stoppages plagued British industry whose origin was often trivial in the extreme. Following the Communist lead the strikes were sudden and in favour of demands which were not referred to the normal process of trade union negotiations. As a consequence the official trade unions fell into disrepute and lay open to Communist domination.

A typical example of how the Communist took advantage of every situation, whether for the benefit or detriment of labour is the following: Communist conveners had one factory on strike for several days in spite of the fact that, as a result of discussion before the strike, all the men's demands had been met. When the strike had run long enough for the Communist purpose, a return to work was proposed, and the Communists gave the men the details of the settlement, then hailed this as a great victory for the workers. The men had lost 10,000 pounds in wages for no other reason than to strengthen the Communist stranglehold on them.

Communist electioneering tactics are exemplified by one minor campaign which was prepared five months before the election. Communists visited most of the 61 branches on nomination night and successfully persuaded 32 to nominate their candidate. Stage two of the plan ensured that Communist branches polled the highest number of votes possible for their man; stage three, that the opposition branches were visited with the intention of discovering any infringement of the rule so that their ballots could be declared null and void. As a result, six branches had their ballots invalidated, all for minor technical infringements of the rule, and, of course, the Communist candidate was elected.

The Communists always have the advantage in union elections. They can agree on one candidate and can ensure that he gets the utmost publicity and support. By contrast, their opposition is usually split many ways. But even in defeat the Communists have been successful. While their opponents sit back and relax after a victory, the Communists are hard at work. Though they hold no union post in the British engineering industry, yet they have a stranglehold on it because their main strength lies on the shop floor, in the shop steward movement. Because they are sure of mass support they are able to ridicule the union officials by ignoring them, or get their support for every move they contemplate. Rarely can a union official stand such pressure, knowing the power of the party. In Britain, the shop steward movement is the vital link in the strategy of the CP for disrupting industry.

Tactics used in plants where the Communists are not in power usually run along similar lines. The first phase calls into action the "tactic of discontent." Communist unofficial leaders were at the seat of every grievance, exploiting it, seeking to speak for the men, to build up prestige rivalling that of the permanent union officials. Freer and with no responsibilities, they were often successful. Without scruples they employed any weapons to gain their end.

Next comes the "smear" from which there is no protection, only discredit. Smear tactics may begin with rumours about a certain union official: (1) He had secret talks with the government labour officer; (2) He was seen in the General Manager's car; (3) he has not paid union dues or has access to union funds.... Anything that will discredit will do in the smear game.

Finally, a deep sense of class solidarity is yoked with a sense of bygone evil tradition on the part of management.

Slow patient constructive efforts lay the ground work and then, in the time of crisis, the apathy of the men will lead them to follow the unofficial leaders.

There was a "new look" in INDIA, as Communists felt that "conditions had matured for taking the struggle for trade union unity to a new and higher level". To implement the new policy, in 1956 both the USSR and China sent fraternal delegates to the annual session of the Congress controlled INTUC, hoping to induce them to withdraw from the ICFTU and affiliate with the Communist controlled WFTU.

The new rightist strategy of the CPI brought them closer to political power than ever before. Their success is reflected in the fact that the Union Minister of Labour stated that "if the Communists were genuinely prepared to join us in rebuilding the country through peaceful and democratic methods, we have no objection in clasping their hand of cooperation," and that if this is a "permanent shift in party policy, the CPI can well be accepted as the opposition party in the country." The past two years have given ample proof of how deluded this man was, to have even hoped for such a reality.

XI. 1957 — INDIA — external cooperation, internal disruption; sabotage the Five Year Plan.

While cooperating externally, the Communist labour plank for 1957-58 called for the spread of disquiet and dissatisfaction among the workers in three areas in particular: the ports, the plantations and the coal and steel belt. Paralysis of each area with a general strike would follow, and then the effort to induce the unions involved to form one national union by affiliation with the AITUC. The next step would be the systematic elimination of the leaders of the national movement who did not succumb

to Communist propaganda, and with that, the CPI would have an extremely powerful revolutionary instrument in their hands. However, in all three fields their dreams were frustrated by the refusal of the INTUC to be led to the slaughter.

The Gua mining settlement of the Indian Iron and Steel Co. saw the first act of the Communist play for the coal and steel belt. In an effort to dislodge the INTUC affiliated union, the Communists used abuse, threats, stone-throwing and finally, with a mob led by their Action Committee, attacked and killed two and injured several other union officers.

As a counter move to an INTUC conference in Jamshedpur, the AITUC invited all the disgruntled elements of the various unions to convene, condemned the Tisco-TWE agreement, and upped the claims put forward by the INTUC, hoping, thereby, to belittle them in the eyes of the rank and file.

A rolling strike was then put in motion, with the first major incidents, violent picketing, assaults and deliberate tampering with equipment, at Telco. In the midst of this disturbance, the Communist resurrected JMU engineered a partial stay-in strike at Tinplate Co., called for a strike in a local press and attempted to induce employees of the Indian Tube Co. to strike over demands which were already under negotiation with the recognized union.

In a move to offset a wage increase granted to the TWU, the JMU, called a "Demands Week" and issued badges with their demands printed on them: (1) A basic wage increase, (an attempt to anticipate and take credit for the Tisco-TWU agreement): (2) An increase in dearness allowance linked with the cost of living, (but the cost of living index was below the level when d.a. was

last revised) ; (3) The reinstatement of discharged workers, (a play on the sympathy of the men toward their fellow workers.).

A procession, public meeting and formal strike notice were the next steps in the assault plan. Simultaneously with Jamshedpur, a strike call was given by the AITUC union in Burnpur, in a bid for power throughout the whole of the steel belt.

The strike notice tempo was kept up by reference by the JMU to the possibility of intervention by the Government and by capitalising on any minor trouble between workers and management. A sudden stoppage in the vital traffic department, a stay-in strike at Agrico, a go-slow movement and, finally, a strike in Tatanagar Foundry, all helped to create an atmosphere of tension in the Steel City at this critical moment.

The JMU then stated that if the strike were declared illegal, it would picket the workers' residential areas. Strike squads would move from house to house, "persuading people to stay indoors"; "those not at home must be prepared to take the consequences."

When the government declared the strike illegal, the JMU urged workers to ignore that notice. Originally calling for a one-day strike, they now made their intention perfectly clear to prolong the stoppage if, as was inevitable, any disciplinary action was taken.

On "D-Day", the approaches to the Works were jammed. Strike squads and activists from other companies prevented access at strategic points. Workers were pulled out of buses, cycle tyres deflated and faithful workers manhandled.

Wild rumour tactics kept some men from work. The Sheet Mills had to be closed down when men left in panic on hearing rumours of loot and stabbing. Another rumour that the Blast furnace superintendent had been killed, contributed greatly to the panic. Yet the one-day strike was a failure as worker attendance was over 50%.

Strikers stoned locomotives and derailed one. In an attack by 200 men on a shop one man died of heart failure. A crane driver died of injuries received on his way to work; a blast furnace worker was beaten unconscious outside the factory gate. In desperation, the JMU swung their main attack to sabotaging key departments, the coke ovens, blast furnaces, transportation and electrical operations. Finally, in the interests of the safety of the plant, the Company closed down.

The JMU ring-leaders now began to work up the feelings of strikers collected outside the gates. A crowd badly damaged cars, burnt scooters, surrounded and intimidated employees. That evening when police moved to arrest the instigators at Communist headquarters, a large mob collected around them and refused to allow them to move. At a prespecified time, a battery of lights pinpointed the police in the crowd and a barrage of stones, bricks and bottles injured over a hundred policemen. Tear gas, a lathi charge and firing sent the wild mob on an arson spree of destruction.

A general strike was called for the following day. Groups of workers put up road blocks; the mob marched, looted and set fire to the Congress office and several shops. Then, when the military were called in, the JMU's rule of rampage came to a sudden halt.

Communist M. P.'s and the AITUC representative arrived, addressed the workers and finally sought a legal

solution. Peaceful methods were adopted only after firm action by the Government had destroyed all hope of gaining their end by disruption and disorder.

The JMU distributed "no return to work" leaflets, falsely accusing the Company of using registration as a means of retrenchment. Their ceaseless campaign right through the night before the plant reopened did not prevent the morning shift from commencing without incident. Eleven hours after the factory commenced work, when they finally saw that all of their efforts were in vain, the AITUC announced, as a face-saving device, the withdrawal of the strike. Their alleged reason, a false one, was that the company had assured them there would be no retrenchment. The JMU, with an eye to public opinion, called the workers to "fulfil their duties and norms of production remembering the country's need for steel" and ironically demanded an "accelerated programme of resumption". True to form, the Communists once again used the workers to reach their own political end. The workers, the company and the nation were the losers to the greater glory of Communism.

The Indian trade union situation has been summed up thus: "In a sense, the unions are little more than strike committees. Activity thrives on conflict. Membership is desultory and apt to be restive. The result is that leaders are apt to stress ideas that will keep the workers keyed up and interested. The rank and file worker is unenlightened, uneducated and most are totally disinterested in progressive development. Suspicion is rampant; there is a natural division between management and labour." These conditions breed Communism. But there is more to the "secret of Communist success" than existing conditions. These factors are :

1. The Communists never lose out where they have *good leadership* and the opposition does not have leadership at least as good. You may tell the ordinary union member that his union is red controlled, but he knows these fellows and trusts them. They are family men and in the past they have delivered the goods. Unless a leadership which he knows and trusts sells itself and rests its case on "bread and butter" problems, Joe Union isn't going to change.

2. Most workers know their Communist controlled union not as a part of the Communist system, but as the union which took an interest in them and their job when no one else cared. That union got them better conditions of work and wages. *They know little of the ideologies involved but only the union which fought their battle and the officers who led the way.*

3. The Communists do *deliver the goods*. The worker sees that in his pay check. He doesn't realize the losses incurred by Communist instigated strikes and stoppages, but looks upon these merely as a means to the end. A new union for him would mean taking a risk.

4. Communist unions look militant. They pose as the *only defenders of the lower class*. To demonstrate that they are on the side of the workers they continuously uncover new issues. Always fighting the class war, the Communists keep up the witchhunt for new injuries against the workers.

5. They *win minorities* to their side by making people who already experience a great deal of hostility or dislike feel that their lot, for better or for worse, is bound up with the fate of the CP. Then they call the anti-communist sentiment "anti-minority."

6. The Communists know how to *play effectively on the emotions* of the workers. The policies they outline and

pursue are so worded as to give the impression that they are in the true interests of the majority.

7. *Top notch propagandists and strategists*, the Communists twist facts about to their advantage. Non-communist leaders are charged with fronting for the boss, accepting low wages, creating trouble from outside. After a while the rank and file are convinced.

8. *Direction* is the "big gun" responsible for the effectiveness of the Communist thrust in the trade union movement. Subject to a chain of authority which guides and instructs him in the party line concerning his objective, the Communist, with hard work, zeal and direction, can usually achieve his objective.

9. The *positive* nature of Communist policy, and the advice and guidance Party workers receive about it, puts the opposition at a serious disadvantage. An alternative policy can not be formulated in sufficient time to win the necessary support.

10. But the crux of the matter is that *the Marxist knows the goal for which he is striving*. whereas the free trade union leader does not have that awareness.

The solution to the Communist problem is not an anti-communism of the negative short-sighted type. This only creates the impression of being an anti-social force directed against the workingman, of preventing reforms that are necessary. When the Communists attack injustice, want and inequality, a mere anti-Communist attitude is not sufficient to put things right. We must work for a social order which allows the dignity of man to express itself in conditions of every day life.

Ours must be practical, positive, well-coordinated plan if we hope to see trade unionism succeed in India, and

we must have the means and the men to put it into action. Our plan must produce able leaders, who, like the Communists, will fight the men's battles and deliver the goods, defend the lower class and the minorities; they must be top-notch propagandists and strategists with organization, direction and a goal. In achieving these objectives we have the example of the Australian C.A. Cell "Movement", the most extraordinary conquest of Communist trade unionism of all times. We have the means of beginning such an organisation in our Labour Relations Institutes; it remains for us to encourage our young men to enter the labour field, to form them in our labour schools, and to send them forth as formed, dedicated, disciplined apostles of labour, men with a vision and a goal who will take the lead from the hands of those who have so long and so often abused it.

L. B. Dietrich

FOREIGN SUBSCRIBERS

ARE REQUESTED TO PAY THEIR SUBSCRIPTIONS
AT AN EARLY DATE. PAYMENT MAY BE MADE
BY CHEQUE.

Manager
Social Action

The Ahmedabad Experiment in Labour-Management Relations ⁽¹⁾

The city of Ahmedabad with a population of over 800,000 is one of the leading textile centres of India, ranking next in importance to the island and city of Bombay. Out of 461 mills in the whole of India 66 are in Ahmedabad. Ahmedabad accounts for nearly 25 per cent of the total cotton cloth production of India and for over 50 per cent. of the country's total output of fine cotton cloth, a substantial part of which is destined for export. It is acknowledged that this progress is partly due to a fairly long record of peaceful and cordial labour-management relations. The present article aims at presenting under what conditions those relations have developed, how they are conducted in day-to-day practice and why comparatively satisfactory results have been achieved. The first part of the article examines the growth of the machinery for the settlement of disputes and the second examines the further steps taken towards a more constructive type of relationship and the promotion of better human relations at the level of the undertaking.

I

All but six mills in Ahmedabad are members of the Ahmedabad Millowners' Association (M. O. A.). It was founded in 1891, and its object, besides the protection of the interests of the millowners and the industry, is to promote good relations between employers and employees and to procure by divers means the welfare of the em-

(1) Condensation of an article, 'The Ahmedabad Experiment in Labour-Management Relations', by E. Daya, INTERNATIONAL LABOUR REVIEW, Vol. LXXIX (1959), pp. 343-379, 511-536.

ployees. For years after it was founded its main work was concerned with the problems of the millowners as producers. Beginning in 1920 it began to pay increasing attention to their problems as employers of labour.

The Ahmedabad Textile Labour Association (T.L.A.) is the legally recognized representative union for the local area of Ahmedabad under the Bombay Industrial Relations Act. The T.L.A. has now about 85,000 members (but of a total standing labour force of over 142,000). Besides the furtherance of organisational and industrial objects, the T.L.A. pays much attention to the welfare and social development of its members devoting to it a great part of its expenditures.

The system of labour-management relations in the Ahmedabad textile industry had its genesis in the famous wage dispute of 1918. The struggle on the side of the workers (who were not organized at the time) was led by Mahatma Gandhi and it was in the course of this struggle that he laid down the principles which were to underlie and guide the T.L.A. Besides the unionisation of the workers the struggle was the occasion for the creation of a permanent arbitration board composed of Gandhi and the then president of the M.O.A.

Experience under the Permanent Arbitration Board (1920-39)

The following aspects of the working of the P.A.B. and of the experience during the period of its existence may be noted :

- (1) The procedure before the Board was of a judicial character, partly because of the introduction of a certain degree of formality in the proceedings but chiefly because of the effort to reach solutions with the comparative detachment and objectivity of a judicial inquiry.

(2) The T. L. A. insisted that the millowners should provide it with necessary and relevant information concerning the economic and financial position of the mills and the industry as a whole. Gandhi, while seeking to have this right of the union recognized, tried to restrain the union representatives so that they would keep their demand within limits.

(3) The awards had only a moral force. During the first years of the life of the Board the Union made numerous complaints of non compliance by the millowners and frequently resorted to strikes to enforce compliance. By the 1930s the number of such complaints had considerably diminished; in the meantime the Union learned to rely for the enforcement of the awards on peaceful means.

(4) The effectiveness of the arbitration machinery increased as the parties themselves learned from their own experience how to make better use of it. Undoubtedly, Gandhi's influence was the most outstanding factor contributing to that effectiveness.

(5) The work of the Board was not really that of arbitration in the strict sense of the term. The arbitrators were partisan representatives of the parties to the dispute; the real arbitration was done by an umpire whom the parties approached in case of disagreement. The situation would have been different if the umpire had acted as a member of the Board from the commencement of the proceedings. In reality, the work of the Board a highly developed form of negotiation and conciliation.

(6) Experience in the functioning of the arbitration machinery revealed certain deficiencies, the most important being the readiness with which the parties brought even minor disputes directly to the Board, without first engaging

in mutual discussions. This led to accumulation of cases and delays. Besides, a dispute could be referred to the Board only by consent of both parties, and either could withhold its consent. To remedy these deficiencies the M. O. A. and the T. L. A. in 1937 entered into an agreement by which provisions were made to remove the existing defects and a sub-arbitration board for the settlement of disputes arising out of agreements, awards and conventions not inconsistent with law was established.

(7) The arbitration machinery did not prevent strikes by the Union, the biggest and most disastrous from the point of view of the workers being that of 1923, which left the Union crippled. Among the frequent causes of Union-sponsored strikes were trade union obstruction and victimisation, violation of awards and demands for wage increases; but they were generally confined to a limited number of mills and affected only a limited number of workers and were of short duration. On the whole, Ahmedabad was an area of relative labour calm.

Experience under Government established machinery

The system of the private Permanent Arbitration Board was abandoned in 1939, when the parties decided to submit their disputes to government established procedures or settlement under the Bombay Industrial Disputes Act of 1938, later modified by the Act of 1946. It can be said in essence that the parties merely continued their previous practice under the Permanent Arbitration Board, with the sole difference that arbitration was exercised not by a body of their own creation but by a body provided by the Government. But it should be noted that the parties made use of direct negotiations for the settlement of their differences to a much greater extent than during the life of the private Board. Even after disputes had been referred to the Court, the parties continued their efforts to

reach a compromise. They were also able to conclude many agreements modifying awards of the Court.

Revival of Private Disputes Settlement Machinery

The private machinery for the settlement of disputes was revived in 1952, when the parties entered into two agreements providing for the settlement of disputes by negotiation, conciliation and arbitration.

Under the agreement on conciliation, any dispute between a mill and any of its workers or between a mill and the T. L. A. or between the M. O. A. and the T. L. A. should first be discussed between the parties. If no agreement was reached within a fortnight or such longer period as was agreed upon, the dispute would be referred to a Conciliation Board consisting of eight members, four from each side.

Under the other agreement, if a dispute was not settled by negotiations or conciliation it could be referred to a Board of Arbitration. For this purpose a panel of arbitrators was to be constituted from time to time by each of the two parties. Before starting the proceedings, the Board was to appoint an umpire to whom the dispute was referred in case of disagreement.

In 1955 the agreement was modified: the Conciliation Board was discontinued, instead of a single panel of arbitrators there were to be two, one constituted by each party, and instead of the arbitrators looking for an umpire each time they could not agree, there was to be a panel of umpires.

Besides the machinery for the settlement of disputes there exists at present the practice of Collective Bargaining which is carried on at two levels: between the M. O. A.

and the T. L. A. relating to general terms of employment in the industry as a whole, and between the T. L. A. and individual mills relating to the application of the industry-wide agreements between the M. O. A. and the T. L. A.

Of recent developments, one of the most significant from the point of view of the stability of relationships was the conclusion of the bonus agreement of 1955 which laid down the conditions for determining the amounts of bonus for the years 1953 to 1957, thus putting an end to the recurring annual crises on the matter of bonus.

In general, under the new machinery, the trend towards increasing understanding and industrial peace has continued. What has proved to be the main source of disturbance to the general pattern of industrial peace has been the occasional unauthorized strikes of union members and strikes by workers belonging to non-T. L. A. unions.

II

During the course of time the parties have moved beyond the mere resolution of conflict and gone forward towards a more constructive type of relationship. In more recent years, significant developments have taken place in the promotion of better human relations at the level of the undertaking. This process of growth was favoured by two influences: that of Mahatma Gandhi himself and that of the Ahmedabad Textile Industry's Research Association (A. T. I. R. A.).

Gandhi had a decisive influence in helping the parties to achieve industrial peace by playing two roles: that of guiding spirit and long-time adviser of the T. L. A., and that of arbitrator. He also exerted influence as a friend whom the parties approached for advice when he could not serve as arbitrator and whose views were respected by both.

Founded in 1947 the A. T. I. R. A. is a cooperative research institution supported by the millowners and the Central Government of India. One of its departments is the Human Relations Department.

Labour-Management Co-operation

Although the M. O. A. recognized the T. L. A. as soon as it was organized, this recognition represented only a degree of acceptance of the Union by the millowners. They accepted it for the purposes of settling disputes — nothing more. This ambiguous attitude was reflected in union victimisation, harassment and obstruction in a number of mills. It was not until the early 1930s that these practices became less frequent. Only the responsible policy of the Union was able to change the initial attitude of the millowners. As regards the T. L. A., although it had assumed as one of its objectives the development of the worker's sense of responsibility to Industry, it was not until 1934 that it felt able to say that it was prepared to cooperate with the employers for the good of the industry.

This change of attitudes engendered in the parties by their mutually satisfactory experience, provided a condition for the development, within the framework of collective bargaining, of a more constructive type of relationship between them. This new relationship was characterised by increasing degree of cooperation. Within this general pattern the parties have devised various ways of dealing with problems of common interest. The first concrete step was the Delhi Agreement of 1935, in which the parties came to a common understanding relating to the introduction of rationalization and the standardisation of wages.

After the A. T. I. R. A. was established it gradually came to fulfil a unique role in the parties' negotiations relating to highly technical questions. Its role is generally limited to that of providing the parties with objective data and

it does not make recommendations; but in serving the parties in this way it acts as a kind of catalytic agent in removing misconceptions and helping them to a common understanding of their problems. Since the workers showed resistance to the implementation of some of the reports, the A. T. I. R. A. evolved a procedure for making the studies a cooperative effort of the parties concerned. When a joint request is received a team is formed for the collection of data. This team is composed of a management representative, a representative of the T. L. A. and a representative from the A. T. I. R. A.

Besides this form of cooperation joint consultation is carried on at the industry level. Until 1957 this was done informally; in 1957 the party is agreed to establish a temporary joint productivity council while negotiations were carried on for the formation of a permanent body.

At the mill level arrangements have been made for a programme of improving working conditions and welfare facilities through inspections by one of the principal officers of the Union accompanied by a management representative and a Union representative for the mill. Joint work-committees and joint production-committees have also been constituted in a number of mills.

Relations in the Undertaking

Before 1948 comparatively little attention was given to working conditions, beyond the terms of arbitration awards and collective agreements, and still less to the question of improving personal relations between the management and the workers. It was the millowners' conviction that mills are not run out of love for humanity but with no other motive than to make a profit. Lack of interest in working conditions was also due to the fact that conditions appeared to be satisfactory compared with other textile centres in India and to the practice of the jobber system,

the jobber being entrusted with the recruitment of workers and with all the immediate supervisory functions which appeared necessary.

The A. T. I. R. A. has been responsible for a great deal of later advances in the improvement of working conditions, efficiency and productivity, in the adoption of more up-to-date methods and concepts of management and supervision, as well as the promotion of better human relations and understanding of human problems in the industry. But it should also be emphasised that the reins of industry in Ahmedabad have largely been taken over by a new generation of managers more willing to keep pace with times. Training programmes for supervisors, an annual conference on management for higher management and an Operative Training Scheme for workers are some of the measures introduced by the A. T. I. R. A. with a view to improving working conditions at the level of the undertaking.

Conclusion

The Ahmedabad experiment is an example of what it is possible to achieve in labour relations even in an underdeveloped economy. It is true that the influence of Mahatma Gandhi and of the A. T. I. R. A. have been exceptional factors in that experiment; yet it nevertheless seems that the basic pattern of the experiment confirms what the experience of many others have shown, namely—

- (a) that the development of good labour-management relations is essentially a process of slow and evolutionary growth;
- (b) that one of the factors of fundamental importance in this development is proper attitudes; and
- (c) that the early stages of this process involve many difficulties and the parties need guidance and assistance from eminent outsiders.

J. Cueli

Social Survey

The Sixth International Conference on Religious Sociology

This Conference held its meeting in Bologna under the presidentship of Cardinal Lercaro. There were 128 participants hailing from various parts of Europe, especially Belgium, France, Spain, Italy, and from the United States of America as well as Latin America. There were two participants from India and Uganda respectively and one from Japan. Because of the preponderance of the European delegates, the discussion at the Conference centred around problems in Europe, and countries like the two Americas, whose populations are largely European in origin. Even a reference to the term 'underdevelopment' during the course of the Conference was understood in the peculiar European situation as applying to those groups of workers who were still outside the situation of the average industrial worker, who enjoy most of the facilities, opportunities and privileges of the lower middle class.

The Conference opened with a brief speech of welcome by the Abbe Houtart, who has been the soul of the Conference ever since its inception. An equally outstanding layman, Professor Le Bras, was unable to attend the Conference because of his recent elevation to the position of Dean of the Faculty of Law at the Sorbonne.

The first paper gave a brief sketch of the development of Religious Sociology especially in Catholic circles during the last three to six years. Many research studies have been made during this period but the author of the paper failed to evaluate their distinctive quality and the contribution they had made toward the development of the

subject. Indeed during the discussion that followed the reading of the paper, one of the participants pointed out that the real scope of religious sociology had not been clearly pointed out and its implications for the pastoral apostolate were still vague. Moreover there was a difficulty about the method to be followed. Should one begin with factual data and then evolve a theory or an explanation, or should not one begin with an hypothesis and test the hypothesis in a particular situation. Obviously a judicious choice between the two methods was desirable. But was not this the precise work of the Conference to define so as to guide research in the future ?

The second paper was a very long contribution from the Centro de Studi Sociali of Milan, entitled "Functional Analysis in Religious Sociology". There was no time for any discussion though the paper proved to be an interesting one insofar as it sought to apply the latest methods of functional analysis of the part religion plays in group life and how social traditions and functional groups affect religious life.

The integrating force of religion received special attention on the second day of the Conference. Abbe Houtart drew attention to the fact of the 'function' and 'disfunction' of a universal religion like Christianity in the social milieu. While religion could help to integrate or harmonise the individual with his group, or various groups among themselves, by its very nature religion could also be an obstruction in the path of integration. Fr. Fichter drew attention to the integrating role that religion had played in the United States of America, so that today the Catholic minority in the States played an increasingly important role in the

national life of the country. This had not always been so. A similar situation was noticeable in Holland where the Catholic Minority had become an important organised group that could do even better than the majority Protestant group, and this had been achieved not by violence but by a slow careful process of integration. The general aim is to transform a numerical minority into a sociological minority. But this requires a strong adherence to the values underscored by the Church among the Catholic minority. These values need to be publicised, so that they may be shared by the non-Catholics and break down prejudices on both the Catholic and non-Catholic sides. In India it is just this process that has to be inaugurated. Our numerical minority has to be transformed into a sociological minority. And the way to do it is to organise a strong Catholic group that is deeply aware of its Catholic values and lives its community life profoundly, so that as a group it does influence the social milieu and gradually achieves an integration through a process of acculturation into the national society. This has happened in the United States in a similar way. It is the family, the Catholic school and the Catholic parish that at various levels bring about this process of integration by conveying the traditional values to the new generation and building up their sense of community life.

The third day of the Conference was devoted to the role of reference groups and belonging groups in the integration of religious attitudes — once again an attempt to apply the most recent methodological practices in sociology to the influence and the role of religion. The question the paper sought to answer was 'In what measure are our spiritual attitudes "influenced" by the profane or religious

groups in which we are integrated. For many Catholics, especially where they form a minority, a useful point of investigation is the reference group that affects their behaviour. Furthermore it is noticed that in the process of conversion the Church does appear as a reference group and a group of belonging before the actual conversion takes place. There is therefore greater need to study the psychosociological attitudes.

Can religion bring about social change? This was another interesting topic that came up for discussion. A distinction has to be drawn between popular religion that often exhibits itself in many superstitious practices and true religion that unfortunately is feebly armed in the fear of apologetics. Thus there may be Catholics who are loyal to their faith but are unable to defend it. A study of the effect of modern urbanisation on the practice of Catholicism reveals a wide variety of effects from a diminution of belief in magical practices to a deeper belief in the fundamental doctrines of the Church.

The last paper of the Conference dealt with the pastoral implications of the influence of the technical age on our present generation. It was felt that the anxieties and tensions of an age of industrialisation had tended to make man materialistic in outlook and this had led to a process of dechristianisation. Religion had reacted in several ways. There had been attempts to remake a Christian society, to organise apostolic activity so as to be fully immersed in the temporal, or to withdraw the Christian from the world to avoid contamination. What should the pastor do in these cases? The world must once again be regarded as a mission, where Christian values had to be resown, and Christian values rediscovered. Greater trust must be placed

in the power of the Word of God and of God Himself, and finally it must be realised that Christian society transcends temporal society.

But if this is so is there any room left for integration? This was the natural question during the discussion that followed the paper. But for lack of time the discussion proved inconclusive.

Finally, on the last day of the Conference, Cardinal Lercaro gave a very interesting talk on the way he had made use of the findings of religious enquiries in his own diocese. He held that a middle way in this matter had to be adopted and that the findings of the enquiries should be judiciously used by the ecclesiastical authorities.

To the Indian observer at the Conference, the most striking phenomenon was the fact that the outlook and the problems discussed and considered by the speakers were so rigidly bound by the limits of their own countries. And from these few facts generalisations of universal application were calmly made without the least hesitation. On the other hand, the Conference was a useful get-together of European Catholic sociologists. Many important points of view were put forward and one could see the urgent desire to cope methodically with the problems facing the Church in a new age of technology. But if the Conference was a good European Conference, it was not a truly International Conference on Religious Sociology.

A. Fonseca

Communism and Pantjasila in Indonesia

Indonesia has recently gone through a profound constitutional revolution under the motto "back to 1945". In its struggle for independence the people of Indonesia in 1945

formed a united front and all differences were for the time being buried. They were not buried very deep and soon after independence various political parties emerged that can roughly be classified as religious, nationalist, socialist and communist. The communists had entrenched themselves very well in that united front and they accused everybody who wanted to form a political group of splitting the national unity. But it was the position they occupied in that front that was mainly the cause of the splitting that took place.

From the beginning, communists have held a strong position. The Partai Komunis had been able to infiltrate the government services. They got key positions and even complete control of many trade unions that were bundled into a communist guided federation known under the name of SOBSI. The small peasants were united in a peasants league known by its initials B.T.I. Its leaders promised that people would be allowed to keep the land they occupied and that had formerly belonged to plantations.

Within these organisations, which could claim several million members, the communists were very active with their system of indoctrination and intimidation. With the rise of political parties came trade unions under the banners of those parties. Hence, just as in politics so also in the trade union world there was not a united bloc to oppose the communist bloc. Only one political party refused to fall back upon trade unions of its own and that was the Catholic Party.

One thing was clear to Catholics viz. that not only trade unions but all social work, including cooperatives and credit unions, should not be political weapons or storehouses

of votes at election time. The question was: Would it be possible to work along non-political lines and gain the confidence of the people? The only way to answer that question was to try it.

On June 19, 1954, some Catholic laymen in Semarang launched a movement for workers and peasants, open to all except communists. They called their movement the Pantjasila Movement. The Pantjasila means the five principles of the Indonesian State viz. belief in God, in man, in the Indonesian nation, in the sovereignty of the nation, in social justice. These principles exactly express the spirit of the Indonesian people and are in full harmony with the social doctrine of the Church, and should appeal to many.

The movement grew, but slowly as was to be expected. People got too used to unions that were the same colour as their political adherence or of staying in SOBSI or B.T.I. organisations out of fear of the consequences. But ultimately the non-political union idea put forward by Catholics caught on especially in Surabaya where a number of smaller independent unions joined the movement. In Semarang the movement went the way of the credit union and the cooperative to gain confidence and it is going ahead. It has been a revelation for many that it is possible to have union leaders who do not look forward to an important political position.

Politically, Indonesia was faced with a deadlock that made it impossible to shape a definite constitution for the nation. The issue was a Pantjasila State or an Islam State. The communists sided with the pro-Pantjasila parties, though they formulate the first principle not as belief in

God but as freedom to believe in God. The deadlock was dangerous because of attempts to stir up feelings against the Islam groups who were being accused of abandoning the Pantjasila of the provisional 1945 constitution.

The army forestalled difficulties by forbidding all political activity and with that went the activity of politically coloured trade unions. It was clear that no exception could be made for the young Pantjasila movement, were it only on account of its name. President Soekarno by decree of Supreme Commander took the country "back to 1945" and to the first provisional constitution of 1945. He is trying to build up a state-structure as outlined in that constitution without a political party system that does not suit Indonesia at this stage of its development.

Will this help the Pantjasila movement started in Semarang in 1954? As the influence of political parties decreases, their trade unions will also decline. At the moment, to be pro-Pantjasila is the same as being anti-communist, in spite of the communist vote in favour of a Pantjasila State. The movement started in Semarang in 1954 will be able to show that it had long ago seen the necessity of going the non-political way along Pantjasila principles, as interpreted by Catholics, for trade unions and social organisations in general.

J. Haarselhorst

59

as
st
ng

li-
ly
on
re
oy
ck
5.
in
es

in
es
o-
n-
a
in
ne
la
ns

761434



